

9-25-1980

**Evangelical Visitor - September 25, 1980 Vol. XCIII. No. 18.**

Glen A. Pierce

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mosaic.messiah.edu/evanvisitor>Part of the [History of Religion Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)Permanent URL: <https://mosaic.messiah.edu/evanvisitor/2406>**Recommended Citation**Pierce, Glen A., "Evangelical Visitor - September 25, 1980 Vol. XCIII. No. 18." (1980). *Evangelical Visitor (1887-1999)*. 2406.<https://mosaic.messiah.edu/evanvisitor/2406>

Sharpening Intellect | Deepening Christian Faith | Inspiring Action

Messiah University is a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. Our mission is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society.



# *Evangelical* **VISITOR**

September 25, 1980



**The Cost of  
Christian  
Community**



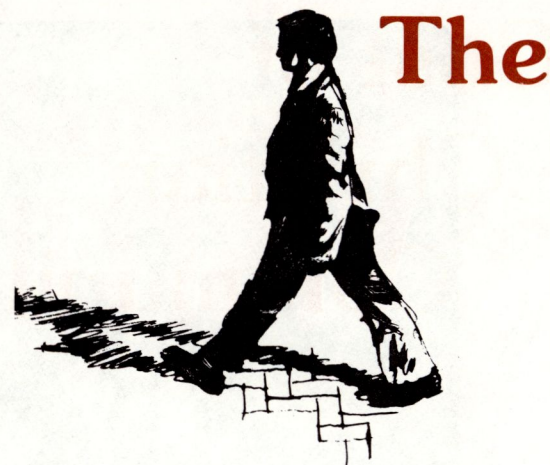
## In this issue . . .

<b>The Cost of Christian Community</b> . . . . .	<b>2</b>
Roger Sider discusses hurts arising in the church—and our responses.	
<b>"Sacrifice" is not a dirty word</b> . . . . .	<b>6</b>
The ministry of the Pertusio family in Annville, PA.	
<b>Church News</b> . . . . .	<b>7</b>
News of the Brethren in Christ across the continent.	
<b>Paying the Price of a Growing Vision</b> . . . . .	<b>8</b>
The Holy Spirit enlarging our missions horizons—and our responses.	
<b>Surprises, a Basket, Fresh Fruit—Of Such is the Kingdom of God</b> . . . . .	<b>9</b>
A local congregation's involvement with Ethiopian refugees.	
<b>"Thanks for flying United"</b> . . . . .	<b>10</b>
A Canadian family, the David Crox-fords, ministering in downtown San Francisco.	
<b>Standing Together</b> . . . . .	<b>12</b>
Part Two of a report on Christian education in New Mexico.	
<b>Readers Respond</b> . . . . .	<b>14</b>
To "Evangelicals and Feminism"	
<b>Editorial</b> . . . . .	<b>15</b>
An open letter to a friend.	
<b>Everyone needs a good-night kiss</b> . . . . .	<b>16</b>
Thoughts to end the day, and this issue.	

**H**AVE YOU EVER FELT that the effort to be part of a Christian group was not worth the pain, that there were just too many frustrations and disappointments along the way? No doubt we have all been tempted with such feelings at times. We humans are profoundly social beings. We need to be related to others. But our relationships are frequently problematic. This is nowhere more obvious than among Christians.

Ironically, for many Christians, life's deepest hurts are inflicted, not by the world outside, but by our own spiritual family. Whether our Christian community is a congregation, a church college, a mission organization or a home Bible study group, the problem is fundamentally the same. For in all these environments our most painful offenses may come from those with whom we are united in Christ, which is doubly painful. The pain is as real as when inflicted from outside our fellowship, with the added anguish of feeling betrayed by the very persons in whom we have put our trust.

Sometimes the disillusionment which comes from such hurt hardens into bitterness, thus erecting a permanent barrier between us and members of our spiritual family. Moreover, the experience of deep hurt within the Christian community runs counter to our understanding of the Biblical model of the church in which relationships are to be characterized by love, patience, tolerance and generosity. Compounding the pain and bitterness may come, then, spiritual doubt and confusion. It is tragic to observe Christians who have grown old and died in spiritual defeat,



harboring old grievances against fellow believers. These traumas are equally harmful at the corporate level for they rob Christian groups of their unity and vitality. To me, the dilemmas posed by the traumas of Christian interpersonal relations are some of the deeper questions we face in our Christian walk. For both as individual believers and as members of Christian groups we will require appropriate attitudes to govern our conduct "when the offense cometh." This article is an attempt at such a subject.

To begin, let us define "hurts" as those circumstances in interpersonal relations in which we experience psychological pain or trauma. While hurts come in all degrees of severity and are of various kinds, let us divide them into two classes, hurts of omission and hurts of commission. The former category includes being ignored, left out and undervalued. These hurts are not generally acutely overwhelming, but derive their painfulness from their cumulative effect over time. For sooner or later the hurting person

### Evangelical Visitor

Volume XCIII (USPS 180-300) Number 18

Official organ of the Brethren in Christ Church, published semi-monthly by Evangel Press, 301 N. Elm Street, Nappanee, IN 46550.

Editor: Glen A. Pierce

Editorial Council:

C. B. Byers, Eber B. Dourte, Isaiah B. Harley, E. Morris Sider, Anna Ruth Ressler

Page Editors:

Missions: Alice Dourte  
Christian Service Ministries: J. Wilmer Heisey

Brethren in Christ Publication Board:

Dwight E. Bert, Paul E. Hostetler, Louis O. Cober, Lester C. Fretz, Paul E. Witter, James W. Esh, Emerson Frey

Mailing Information:

Send manuscripts and editorial correspondence to the Editor, P. O. Box 166, Nappanee, Indiana 46550.

Send subscriptions and change of address (both old and new addresses) to Evangel Press, 301 N. Elm Street, Nappanee, Indiana 46550.

**Renewals:** 1 year - \$7.00; 2 years - \$13.50; 3 years - \$20.00; 5 years - \$32.50. **New and gift subscriptions,** \$6.00 a year. **Lifetime,** \$125.00.

Second-class postage paid at Nappanee, Indiana 46550.

Printed in U.S.A.

## October - "Visitor month"

- a time to introduce the Visitor to new readers. (Sample copies of this issue are available for distribution in local congregations.)
- a time for current readers to renew their subscriptions.

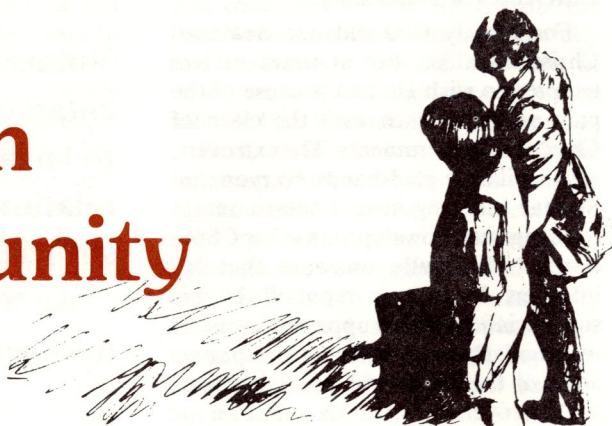
Costing less than 30¢ per issue, it's your best buy this fall!

Subscription information is available in your local congregation. If you live at some distance from a Brethren in Christ Church, send your renewal, new or gift subscription to: Evangel Press, 301 N. Elm St., Nappanee, IN 46550.



# Cost of Christian Community

by Roger C. Sider



experiences these slights as a rejection of himself as a person. Hurts of commission include unjust criticism, gossip, false accusations, distrust and hostility. These hurts are acutely painful for in these circumstances the pain is actively inflicted.

Unfortunately, this problem is not confined to isolated, individual cases. There is disturbing evidence that North American evangelicals are dealing with the risk of hurt feelings by large scale *denial* and *avoidance*. In the service of *denial* is the steady stream of Christian books, euphemistically labeled "inspirational" in which one finds a formulary approach for problems of hurt, depression and pain in interpersonal relations together with platitudes about "taking it all to the Lord" and "the glories of the life hereafter."

This advice to minimize or to deny our interpersonal hurts may actually foster self-deception because we are made to feel guilty about our hurt feelings. And to avoid such guilt we may fail to admit even that we have been hurt. Such attempts are ultimately, of course, counter-productive. Particularly when the hurt is a severe one, denial simply does not work. In these cases Christians who have not learned other coping methods are particularly vulnerable to defeat. My criticism of the "inspirational" approach to hurt feelings is not to deny the need for prayer, faith and hope. It is simply to say that preliminary to any effective remedy must come a realistic acknowledgement of the pain.

Another contemporary method of dealing with these traumas is by *avoidance*. There have always been believers who remain on the fringes of Christian groups in order to minimize the risk of hurt. But the avoidance mechanism is being powerfully fostered today by the meteoric rise of the electronic church. This contemporary phenomenon is tailor-

made for those who prefer their spirituality untarnished by the difficulties of real relationships among Christians, for it requires no relatedness at all. Rather, the required spiritual "fix" is provided at regular intervals by a television personality, the visual image of a charismatic, benevolent father figure who is sufficiently two-dimensional to support the most diverse projections. The viewer is left to imagine what a relationship with such a person would be like and, as in all fantasy, is free to construct the relationship to his own specifications. This privatizing of religious commitment and experience is, according to Martin E. Marty, a fundamental characteristic of modern American religion. But insofar as it is spirituality without community, it is a pathologic caricature of the Christian faith.

While denial and avoidance are maladaptive mechanisms in dealing with hurt feelings in Christian community, their use is easily understood. For a more thoughtful approach is seriously obstructed by our propensity to quickly lose perspective when in pain. Trauma, whether physical or psychological, is profoundly disturbing. By upsetting our equilibrium it throws us back upon automatic, even primitive, coping mechanisms. Usually these reactions tend in the direction of withdrawal to "lick our wounds" or in the direction of lashing out in a vengeful counter-attack.

**For many Christians,  
life's deepest hurts are  
inflicted by our own  
spiritual family.**

Moreover, at such times we are strongly motivated to identify and accuse an agent causing our hurt. For when we are in pain we need to blame someone. This psychological need is humorous to observe when we kick back at the shovel over which we have stumbled. But in interpersonal relations this hasty search for the offender is often the beginning of serious error. For to closely examine the sources of our hurt is to begin to understand the profound consequences of the Fall upon our Christian communal lives. The fact is that many of our hurts are not inflicted intentionally or maliciously but are, rather, a function of the fallenness of our present state. Consider with me five major sources of hurt which are both ubiquitous and unavoidable.

## Human Limitations on Perspective

One of the most frequent causes of pain among Christians is our inability to fully understand the nature of interpersonal situations. Each of us acts, assuming that we know how our actions will be viewed by others and that our intentions will be clear. How often we are wrong. This predicament is commonly the stuff of television comedy in domestic scenes where husband and wife fail completely to understand each other—from the limited perspective of each, the other's motives are totally misconstrued.

The consequences in real life, however, are as often tragic as humorous. Among Christians, we are often hurt by our fellow believers' apparent insensitivity. In the myriad of daily interactions which constitute Christian community these injuries are frequent. Often our behavior is hurtful simply because we did not foresee its impact upon another. Moreover, we utilize a double standard in regard to this limitation of perspective. When we are at fault we ask, defensively, "But how could I have known?" When, on the other hand, it is we who have been hurt, we cry out, "She should have known better."

Nor does salvation or sanctification enable us to fully surmount our mortal perceptual limits. It is as humanly impossible to see all of the interpersonal consequences of our behavior as it is to see inside someone else's head. It should come as no surprise then that others in the faith should hurt us. Indeed, to come into relationship with another is to expose ourselves to the hazards of our common perceptual defect. Those who are partially blind should not be offended if they occasionally step on each other's toes. →



## **The Cost of Christian Community . . .**

### **Scarcity of Time and Resources**

A second source of hurt has to do with the scarcity of time and resources. In this way reality is cruel. For when we decide to spend time with one person we are simultaneously denying that time to others. Of course role expectations dictate many of these decisions. It is accepted that a married couple will spend more time together than with others. But in our Christian communities we cannot distribute our time completely democratically. Friendship is selective. The hurts inflicted by this process are particularly painful in regard to the important people of the Christian group. Why, we ask, does the pastor or the missionary leader have time to talk to her and not to me?

Similarly, in the distribution of resources there is always an excess of needs over means. For example, if the biology division at a Christian college gets a special supplement to the budget for equipment, then the division of social science may have to do without. Or at congregational budget time, higher support for my favorite missionary cause may mean lower support for yours. The opportunities for hurt in these situations are legion. For in every case someone will be left out, some will not get their way. Yet, here too, the radical limitedness of our earthly existence is responsible in most cases for the hurts inflicted. Again, the Fall has created conditions for our pain.

**In Christian community  
we can expect that  
we will be  
periodically disappointed,  
hoping for more  
from our brothers  
and sisters  
than we receive.**

### **Differences in Personality**

Fortunately God did not create all Christians alike. But at times we are tempted to wish He had because of the pain we experience with the clash of Christian temperaments. The extrovert, who smilingly glad-hands everyone on Sunday morning in an honest attempt to engage in fellowship with other Christians, is blissfully unaware that his introvert brother is repulsed by his superficiality and his apparent insincerity. Similarly the slow-to-warm-up character of the introvert Christian strikes his extrovert brother as rejection or condescension. Or compare the conservative with the risk-taker. When it comes time to launch a new building, hire more staff or reorganize the administrative structure the conservative is always fretting and worried. His brother the risk-taker is impatient and impulsive, restlessly straining to get on with God's work.

There are many conceivable dimensions of personality and for each, one can imagine Christians at the opposite ends of any given dimension consistently having trouble understanding each other. If either one mistakenly identifies his temperamental outlook with God's revelation or his brother's different perspective as willful uncooperativeness, the opportunities for hurt are multiplied.

Sometimes personality attributes are painful because they make it impossible for others to supply us with what we need. Consider, for example, the harsh minister who can only preach convincingly concerning God's judgment and wrath, but who cannot effectively communicate God's love and mercy. For the guilt-laden parishioner who desperately needs to hear and apply the message of love and mercy, the worship hour will be traumatic. Or reflect upon the Christian wife who longs for open communication with her husband while he appears unable to articulate his feelings or thoughts. She will suffer immeasurably from the cumulative effect of such painful frustration.

In fact it is the rule, not the exception, that we find human relationships partially rather than completely fulfilling. In Christian community we can expect that we will be periodically disappointed, hoping for more from our brothers and sisters than we receive. This too is the blight of the Fall, alloying as it has the original glory of human nature with the base metals of defect and sin.

**Vulnerability will  
entail our willingness  
to engage in  
relationships which are  
sufficiently open and  
close to risk being  
hurt ourselves.**

### **Differing Understandings of the Gospel**

A fourth cause of hurt among Christians originates in our different perceptions of the gospel. It is clarifying to realize that along with all the other limits imposed upon us by our fallen nature, our understanding of the gospel is notoriously liable to become unbalanced. Thus the careful attention throughout church history to the definition of orthodoxy in belief and practice.

Yet even with these constant efforts to steer clear of idiosyncratic extremes, we each have our own understanding of the gospel and its implications for life. Even within the mainstream of contemporary Christian orthodoxy there is a wide range of currents. And it is easy to be offended by those who do not share one's own point of view. Such current controversies as the role of women, social activism, or the charismatic movement can quickly extend beyond dispassionate discussion to painful polarization. When this occurs it is difficult to avoid bruised egos on all sides. For we easily construe a refutation of our opinion to be a personal attack, and we are never more self-righteous than in the defense of our cherished religious beliefs.

### **Separation, Disease and Death**

Finally, psychological trauma results from the triple threats of separation, disease and death. For in Christian community, as we get close enough to need one another, we are vulnerable to all these losses. Chronic or progressive illness in a valued Christian friend not only may deprive us of fulfillment formerly available in the relationship, but may place new demands upon us. Separation, too, is painful. I recall the case of a young woman who was deeply hurt

*Evangelical Visitor*



when the family through whom she had become a Christian announced plans to move away. Because she had come from a severely disturbed home, this family had provided her with her first experience of genuine caring. She was filled with grief and experienced severe feelings of loss, deprivation and abandonment in the anticipation of their departure. She could hardly admit to herself the lurking thought that if they really cared about her they would not leave. And she found herself involuntarily withdrawing into a shell, as if to protect against any future traumatic separations.

Death is, of course, the greatest blow of all. Particularly when the death is untimely—that of a child, a young mother or husband—we are thrown off balance. It is common for those remaining to experience the loss as a personal rejection or abandonment. Moreover, we are tempted to envy and doubt. Why, we ask, did it have to happen to my family? And how could a good, loving God allow this to happen to me? Here, the effect of the Fall is felt most keenly.

### **The Other Side**

The foregoing discussion attempts to outline the radical limitedness of the human condition, to put into an existential context the conditions of life which render recurrent hurt and suffering in Christian relationships unavoidable. Moreover, it seeks to make clear that in many cases the hurt is not inflicted out of motives of malice but rather is the inevitable consequence of relatedness.

But our analysis is unfortunately not complete. If it were, it would render our dealing with hurt feelings relatively unambiguous, for we could rest assured that our interpersonal pain was never intended and therefore could be easily forgiven. There is also, however, a dark side to the issue of hurt feelings in Chris-

tian community. That stems from the fact that some hurts are purposefully and maliciously inflicted and that in other cases Christians choose to be offended for base motives of their own.

First, let us consider the purposeful infliction of pain. There is no stronger prohibition in the New Testament than that against hurting our brothers. Throughout, we are commanded to love our brothers, to have a consistently active concern for their spiritual and human welfare and to avoid any conduct which would cause them discouragement or offense. Indeed, in the face of such overwhelmingly strong teaching one might expect that such a thing would never happen. But Sigmund Freud was right when he observed that beneath every strong prohibition lies hidden a strong temptation.

Because we are all aware of scriptural teaching on this point, however, we rarely inflict hurt with the ingenuous directness of our children. They are quick to retort when upset, "I hate you, Mommy." As adults we are much more sophisticated. We inflict pain in indirect, subtle and devious ways, replete with rationalized justification. We seek to offend in such a way that we could deny, if necessary, our intention to hurt.

In addition, there are some Christians who relish being hurt, who are hypersensitive, who read rejection into the most casual encounter and who habitually set themselves up to be misunderstood, isolated or ignored. The psychological motives of such persons are complex. In some cases these people are unconsciously seeking justification to be unfriendly and hostile in return. In others, a pathological self-loathing leads them to court hurt and pain as a way of inflicting upon themselves psychological punishment. Still others may be attempting to extract sympathy and attention from others for their plight.

Lest we brush off such behavior as irrelevant to us, we should remember that our hurt and offense is not totally inherent in the behavior of others. When we have been injured it is fruitless to deny that we are in pain. But our response to the hurt determines its final character. This is the difference between *suffering hurt* and *being offended*. To suffer hurt is to be the victim of a trauma. But to be offended is to make a choice, to decide to take offense. For hurts will inevitably come but we need not be offended. Viewed in this light the responsibility for offense is shared between perpetrator and victim.

**Some hurts are purposefully and maliciously inflicted . . . in other cases Christians choose to be offended . . .**

### **Conclusion**

As one might predict where human beings are involved, a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of hurt feelings is quite complex. No simple truism will adequately cover the ground. Furthermore, in individual situations we are often left with more questions than answers, for we usually lack sufficient information to justly apportion responsibility for hurt feelings among the involved parties. But some conclusions are evident.

It should be clear that any view of Christian community which does not include the inevitability of hurt at the hands of our brothers and sisters is misinformed. Such trauma is, in fact, one of the costs of community. For it is equally true that we live in the shadow of the Fall as we do of the Cross. The kingdom has begun and we are to work toward its fulfillment, but it is not yet fully realized.

In the meantime, the church is called to community, to be an approximation of and preparation for that kingdom which is not of this earth. Neither denial of hurt feelings nor the avoidance of community is an adequate response. Rather we are each required to be humble, vulnerable and loving. Humility will be necessary as we eschew defensiveness to acknowledge that we, too, will unavoidably inflict hurt upon our brothers and sisters. Vulnerability will entail our willingness to engage in relationships with one another which are sufficiently open and close to risk being hurt ourselves. And the love which is called for cannot be limited to those who have never hurt us. That is a cheap and easy love, a mutual narcissistic admiration of one another's comeliness. We are also called to love those who have hurt us, to be hurt but not take offense. That love is pure gospel, for it is a love the world knows nothing of.

*Dr. Sider is Associate Professor of Psychiatry in the University of Rochester's School of Medicine. He serves on the Board for Missions and the Board of Administration.*

**Our response to the hurt determines its final character. This is the difference between *suffering hurt* and *being offended*.**



**W**HEN OUR NEW HOUSE was just under roof, people began to ask, "Will this be a house or a church?" We have asked ourselves that question, too, for it has become increasingly clear that we received our home with strings attached. What we thought was going to be "our" home has evolved into a joint ownership between God and our family. He has specifically laid claim to our guest room. As a result the room has been "home" to relatives, missionaries, lay Christians, choir members and an assortment of Vietnamese refugees. Our house has become, in fact, God's house.

Not that it was always easy for us to accept that plan. Both my husband and I are shy, private, and homebodies by nature. But in 1975 the sudden influx of Vietnamese refugees forced us out of our private lives. The guest room was only a dream at that time, but with the help of members of our congregation, it soon became a reality. Our first house guests became three Vietnamese men seeking refuge in the United States.

Our personal struggle was at least as great as theirs. We adopted each other as "family." As a result, that relationship underwent all the love, frustration, hurt, and joy that characterizes any family, only in a more intense form. From it my husband, my children, and I emerged at least 50% transformed. Now, as people go in and out of that God-ordained guest room, it is hard to believe our attitude of five years ago.

Inevitably someone breathes a sigh of relief for us when our guest room is temporarily empty. "You've sacrificed so much," I hear over and over again. Often I will detect a note of pity in those voices. Somewhere, somehow, sacrifice has become a dirty word.

While studying the sacrifices outlined in Leviticus, I have noticed something very interesting. Of the five types of offering mentioned, three expressed joy and were, in fact, celebrations of a right relationship to God. And each of these three is described as a sweet savor to the Lord.

We often view Christ's sacrifice on the cross very negatively. We look at what Jesus gave for our salvation and say, in effect, "No, thank you. Sacrifice is not for me." But notice what Ephesians 5:2 says:

... Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

At the same time that Christ suffered, there was a degree of celebration that we

## "Sacrifice" is not a Dirty Word

by Carolyn Pertusio

will probably never understand in this life. Perhaps some view Jesus' last words "It is finished" as the relieved cry of a suffering man. I choose to believe they expressed the emotion of a fulfilled life, a life of joyful dedication to God's will.

Equally exciting is this passage from II Corinthians 2:15, 16:

For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life.

In our daily contacts, people should be able to sense the joy of a life dedicated to God in fellowship with Him. We are, after all, commanded to present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. What better way to express that sacrifice than in joyful obedience?

And if that obedience involves several more loads of wash per week, nightly dinners for twelve, feelings of anger and disappointment, lack of privacy, and demands on our time, what of it? If we've sacrificed, we've gained so much more.

Among other things, we've gained a tremendous love for people. The house seems empty now with only the six of us in it. We crave the presence of people, the feeling of every nook and cranny filled with fellow human beings.

While we are still shy, we now feel comfortable in the presence of others. We have expressed the whole gamut of emotions to those who have lived with us, and still we are loved. No longer do we fear relationships because we know

that agape love does indeed conquer all.

We have learned to pour ourselves into people. Whether our guests are here for a night or a year, we give them as much of ourselves as we can. And perhaps I should add, as much of our *real* selves as we can. Our guests see us as we are, with our weaknesses as well as our strengths. As a result, they are free to be real with us. For some, it's a liberating experience.

But what excites me most is our children's growth. They are at ease with all kinds of people—young and old, Christian and non-Christian, round-eyed or slant-eyed. They have seen, first-hand, people who have suffered from crippling diseases and those who have suffered for political reasons. They've seen strong Christians and weak Christians. They've learned compassion and concern for the non-Christians of this world. Our children are more aware than most of a strange world on the other side of the globe where people die from starvation and from struggles for freedom. Our daughter talks of becoming a missionary to the Orient. Our son bursts into tears at the mere mention of someone suffering.

Sacrifice? How else could we have gained all this and more in so short a time? No, sacrifice is not a dirty word; it's a golden opportunity for Christ to work in and through us—for His honor and glory.

Carolyn Pertusio is a member of the Palmyra (Pa.) congregation.

*Evangelical Visitor*



# Church News

## Allegheny

The **Canoe Creek** congregation reports holding a Hymn Sing on Saturday, July 26, on the Dan Douglas property. The Master's Trio and the King's Little People provided music for the evening. • **Rev. Lorne Lichty** gave his farewell sermon to the **Green Spring** congregation on Sunday August 17. **Rev. Larry Strouse** has assumed pastoral responsibilities at Green Spring.

## Atlantic

**Rev. Daniel Hoover** was installed as pastor of the **Holden Park** congregation on Sunday, August 24, by **Bishop John Byers**. A fellowship meal was held to welcome the Hoovers. • A missions weekend was held by the **Skyline View** congregation on September 13-14. Special guests were **John and Lucille Graybill**, missionaries to Japan.

## Canadian

During the months of July and August, the **Ridgemount** congregation held its evening services with the Calvary Missionary Church. • Beginning on August 1, **Rev. Arthur Heise** began serving the **Falls View** congregation until the **Dwayne Huletts** are able to assume pastoral duties.

## Central

The **Highland** congregation helped their pastoral couple, the **Louis Cobers**, celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary with a fellowship on Wednesday evening, July 30. • The **Morrison** congregation reports several persons were baptized in a special service on Sunday, August 24. The musical group, the "Proverbs" presented a special concert on August 3.

## Midwest

A special guest for the **Mountain View** congregation on Sunday, September 14, was former astronaut, Colonel Jim Irwin. He spoke to the youth during the Sunday school hour and to the entire congregation in the worship service.

## Pacific

**Jim and Cindy Waddell** traveled to California August 12-15, and visited 12 different churches to tell about the work of the **Redwood** congregation. Prior to their tour, they gave testimony to their home congregation.

## Births

**Abell:** Jonathan Allen, born August 5, to Dennis and Shirley (Attick) Abell, Manor congregation, Pa.

### Missions Prayer Fellowship Children's Mission Project 1980-81

Helping to provide tutorship  
for missionary children in  
Nicaragua and Zambia.

Goal - \$6,000

Send funds to:

Lucille Ulery, 13484 Cumberland Hwy,  
Orrstown, PA 17244

Mary L. Sider, R. 1, Wellandport  
Ontario L0R 2J0

**Bell:** Lance David, born July 23, to Dave and Nanci Bell, Mountain View congregation, Co.

**Brown:** Rebecca Maria, born July 31, to David and Beverly Brown, Highland congregation, Oh.

**Bulgrien:** Gina Elizabeth, born August 7, to James and Donna Bulgrien, Palmyra congregation, Pa.

**Chamberlain:** Nicole Candice, born July 30, to Darwin and Bernice Chamberlain, Fairview Avenue congregation, Pa.

**Douglas:** Sarah Ann, born August 7, to Dennis and Ruth Ann Douglas, Beulah Chapel congregation, Oh.

**Gibbons:** Emily May, born July 24, to Vaughn and Barbara Gibbons, Sherkston congregation, Ont.

**Hess:** Robert David, born August 8, to Ron and Bambi (Ebersole) Hess, Manor congregation, Pa.

**Lehman:** Kristen Marie, born June 9, to Myron and Denise (Wingert) Lehman, New Guilford congregation, Pa.

**Simpson:** Jeffrey Lee, born August 1, to Jim and Jane Simpson, Union Grove congregation, In.

**Stretch:** Jennifer Ann, born August 14, to Joe and Jane Stretch, Palmyra congregation, Pa.

**Tyrrell:** Ryan David, born June 10, to Gerald and Jane Tyrrell, Meadowvale congregation, Ont.

**Wengert:** Denise Eileen, born August 11, to Donald and Donna Wengert, Air Hill congregation, Pa.

**Wolfe:** Stephen Douglas, born July 23, to Glenn and Sue Wolfe, Palmyra congregation, Pa.

## Weddings

**Alleman-Martin:** Maxine Ellen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hann and the late Harold Martin, and Mark Andrew, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dean Alleman, Newville, Pa., in the Montgomery Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. H. Melvin Boose and Rev. John Rosenberry officiating.

**Koons-Funk:** Kandyce, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Funk, Mercersburg, Pa., and John, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Koons, Waynesboro, Pa., August 2, in the Five Forks Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Rupert Turman and Wilbur Besecker officiating.

**McConnell-Warner:** Colette Lee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Warner, and Phillip Lee, son of Mr. and Mrs. John McConnell, August 9, in the Highland Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Louis Cober officiating.

**Shelly-Helfrick:** Glenda Kay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Helfrick, Mercersburg, Pa., and Mark Tim, son of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Shelly, Marion, Pa., June 21, in the Montgomery Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. H. Melvin Boose and Rev. Garnet Myers officiating.

**Wiedrick-Walker:** Jane, daughter of Mrs. Louise Walker and the late Cyril Walker, Hagersville, Ont., and Darrell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Wiedrick, Waterford, Ont., May 17, in the Springvale Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Ken Wiedrick, brother of the groom, Rev. Allan Heise, and Rev. Donald Talbot officiating.

## Obituaries

**Engle:** Paul H. Engle, born May 9, 1915, died August 2, 1980 in New York. He is survived by his wife, Ruth; a daughter, Elaine Ucci; two sons: Ronald and Philip; six grandchildren; two brothers: Dr. Harold and John; and two sisters: Alma and Marion. He was a member of the Palmyra Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. Ethan M. Gramm.

**Gardner:** Dorothy I. Gardner, Hollidaysburg, Pa., born May 2, 1928, died May 26, 1980. She is survived by her husband; three children; and three grandchildren. The funeral service was conducted in the Bolger-Freidline Funeral Home by Rev. Mark Slagenweit. Interment was in the Canoe Creek Cemetery.

**Hall:** Mrs. Marion Dorothy Hall, born November 17, 1916, died July 26, 1980. She was the daughter of Joseph and Ada Heise. She was married to John Hall who survives. Also surviving are four children: Alvin, Mrs. Marlene Nigh, Howard, and Mrs. Marjorie Danton; her mother; seven grandchildren; and two brothers: Rev. Allan and Russell. She was a member of the Springvale Brethren in Christ Church. The memorial service was conducted in the Springvale Church by Rev. Charles Byer, Rev. Paul Nigh, and Bishop Harvey Sider. Interment was in the Springvale Greenwood Cemetery.

**Light:** Mrs. Sarah Nye Light, born January 13, 1907, died August 8, 1980. She was married to Alvin Light who survives. Also surviving are a son, Earl; a daughter, Jane Raser; and two stepdaughters: Jean MacFarlane and Eleanor Hess. She was a member of the Palmyra Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. Ethan M. Gramm.



# Paying the Price of a GROWING VISION

*J. Wilmer Heisey*

**I**N 1980, hundreds of Brethren in Christ went to Canada for a General Conference at Hamilton, Ontario. In 1880, a much smaller group of Brethren in Christ went to Canada for the same reason—to attend a Conference in the Markham District. At both events brothers and sisters talked together about felt needs and discovered together what the word of the Lord said to them regarding specific concerns for faithfulness in their decades of the Eighties. Convictions grew, motivations stirred, and horizons began to enlarge.

Entering the 1970's, concern grew within the church about annual General Conferences that seemed to be "treadmilling"—frequently working through agendas inadequately conceived, too often debated only extemporaneously, and sometimes implemented perfunctorily. In 1972 this led to the decision to hold biennial conferences, giving more time for preparation of agenda, study of issues and in-depth Bible studies. Steps were taken to enrich the occasion by making it possible for more people to participate, as members eligible to share in all of General Conference deliberations.

Four conferences under the biennial plan have confirmed the wisdom of the 1972 decision. Each conference has focused timely issues for the entire brotherhood:

- 1974—Discipling Believers in Today's World
- 1976—Sharing and Conserving God's Resources
- 1978—The Pilgrimage of the Brethren in Christ

1980—Inward and Outward Bound in the Eighties

Each of these conferences has caused ferment within the lives of people who attended which in turn has been carried by them to others with whom they work across the widely scattered church. Growing convictions and increased motivations are in evidence. Spinoffs from these four conferences have yielded continuing earnest dialogue, articles, letters and new directions by general boards and local congregational programs. A case in point is the Board for Missions.

The 1974 Conference created a World Hunger Fund and assigned the Board for Missions to administer it. This led to a somewhat hesitant but genuine effort on the part of many people in their homes to allow God to speak to them from Scripture about their personal responsibility in response to the suffering poor.

The 1976 Conference focused on sharing our resources which, while making most delegates uncomfortable, created new visions of needs all around us. When the mission board brought a recommendation to implement a more adequate support system for assigned workers, it was strongly endorsed. But from the floor of Conference, concern was clearly voiced because there were no plans announced for opening new missions efforts.

In 1978, Conference wholeheartedly endorsed the new ministries recommendations in the face of rapidly escalating support costs. This same body that gave the go-ahead signals on new ministries also voted to establish a pension for

retired missionaries and asked the mission board to administer the program and "raise funds for the same." In implementing the 1978 decisions the Board brought funding proposals to the 1980 Conference which for the first time made visible the price of our brotherhood's growing vision.

The three bienniums (1974-80) have been a training program for the Brethren in Christ, not totally unlike the three year course Jesus gave for the twelve disciples he chose to lead his work. We have learned a great deal about what it means to be disciples. Our awareness of needs in the world grows in direct proportion to our walking in the Master's footsteps. We are only vaguely aware of what he means when describing the high cost of "leaving all" to follow him. As we keep our eyes on him, we respond to his call to commitment, not knowing the price tag.

And we're a restless people. We can hardly wait to get going. Yet he who told us to go, also commanded us to wait—for the promised gift from the Father, power through the Holy Spirit. As was needed by Peter, John and all the other disciples, this empowerment was the indispensable ingredient of their adequacy for their mission. This gift did not fall only on those who would travel the roads and sea-lanes of the Roman empire. It was needed by and given to all those who were in supportive roles.

And what happened? The seemingly impossible happened. Those persons, caricatured as ignorant and unlearned, made a complete sacrifice of themselves. God used their offerings to "turn the world upside down." And how does that apply to the Brethren in Christ? We are as unimpressive as were Peter and his companions to the Sanhedrin. Yet as we make our total commitment and match the Twelve in "obedience," the Holy Spirit will take what we have and use it.

As Brethren in Christ, is our vision too large? Is our commitment great enough? Is our obedience complete? Is God able to accomplish His purposes through us? Individual honest answers to these questions should be pondered by each of us in our private prayer closets. As we do that, the Lord will tell us what to do. None of us need worry about God's part nor that of our brother, whom we so often falsely imagine holds "the key to success" in the outward bound ministries of the Eighties.

*The author is Executive Secretary of the Board for Missions.*

*Evangelical Visitor*



Wanda Heise, left, admires the treasured hand-woven basket she received from Micias, right. The basket was made by Micias' wife, who is still in Ethiopia and sent the basket as a gift to the family who would sponsor Micias. Also pictured is Angela Heise and Yisihak.



# Surprises, a Basket, Fresh Fruit— Of Such is the Kingdom of God

**T**HE STORY begins in Eritrea, Ethiopia. It begins very personally for Eritrean men and women, who fled for their lives in the dark of night. Each of the refugees has a tale of fear, sorrow and violence preceding the moment of escape.

The story is a kingdom story, new evidence that God is working in unexpected ways through members of the Harrisburg (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church.

In November 1979 while participating in their annual Missions Prayer Conference weekend, members decided to sponsor boat people as their special yearly project. Since this was a major project they decided to bring it to the whole congregation, which enthusiastically raised \$2,000.

Then the group met their first surprise. They were told at that time there were no boat people needing sponsors in the Harrisburg area. So the congregation decided to request a Haitian or Cuban group.

Then in mid-May Mennonite Central Committee responded by asking them instead to consider Ethiopian (Eritrean)

refugees temporarily in Italy. These refugees would soon be forced to go back to Ethiopia if sponsors could not be found.

The congregation, after discussing their now twice-diverted plans, agreed to the new direction, sure that God was leading. They were told to expect the arrivals in six weeks. Excitement grew; preparations were jelling. Then suddenly, only two weeks later in early June, they received hurried phone calls. Soon eight young Eritreans stepped off the plane in Harrisburg to meet sponsors and begin life in a strange country.

For each "Eritrean-American" the story of the flight has bits of kingdom news (God's leading) shining through. It is there in the stories of security raids, threats, hiding and killings.

Micias (all names of Eritreans have been changed) points boldly to moments of miracle in his tale of narrowly escaping death by the military. Although the family is constantly under surveillance, his father is in hiding and his brother has been killed by the military, Micias spoke with certainty of knowing God's providential care.

He tells how a friend in the right place had miraculously phoned to warn him that military officials were coming to kill him, just moments before they arrived. He jumped out of a window, and hid in sewers until the next morning. Then he met a kindly peasant who switched clothes with him and allowed him to hastily borrow his cart and oxen to make his escape as a "farmer."

Yisihak also declares that God's people can make a real difference in the course of human events. A salaried churchman, he was imprisoned for actively teaching the Bible. The parish-

ioners banded together and demanded to know why he should be jailed, vouching for his good character. Eventually he was released. However, his home was being watched and Yisihak fled in fear for his life.

Mamitu and Tshaitu know God's presence is with them. It is seen through the caring they received from their families. Mamitu's escape led to her brother's imprisonment, yet she affirmed with serene certainty that he did and does completely support her leaving. She had refused to marry a man of power, non-Eritrean, and as a result her life was in danger.

Tshaitu, the youngest refugee in the group, left her home at age 16 when security men threatened to take her if they could not find her father. He has been jailed twice since then.

What have the sponsoring families learned in this new venture of kingdom work? They see God's hand in the way the individual refugees fit into the different North American families they have joined. Families selected their individual refugees by names while on the way to the airport to meet them. One family chose the woman whose name their six-year-old daughter could most easily say. All agree that had they been given background details of the refugees' life histories, they would certainly have chosen the "wrong" ones. God's plan? They tend to think so.

Wanda Heise, whose husband Glen, a medical student, is often away from home, says she is especially happy that they have two men living with them, as they are good substitute "fathers" to her

to page 11



**O**UR FLIGHT began in Buffalo, New York, at 11:01 a.m. EDT, November 1, 1978. Time passed quickly as we traveled west above the clouds. After a stop in Chicago we soon heard the pilot announce, "Ladies and gentlemen, . . . if you'll look out of the left windows you'll notice a distant haze. This haze is present because of the forest fires raging to the north. . . . local time is 3:33 p.m. PDT. Fasten your seatbelts, enjoy your stay in San Francisco and thanks for flying United. . . ."

All day my wife and I had been anticipating this moment. Our two children had been less than perfect since we left Chicago and now we were marching them into an environment we knew little about. The Lord's direction had been so clear to us in our decision and we were convinced this was His will for us.

Finally the plane jolted to a halt and we passed from its cabin into the hustle and bustle of San Francisco life. There were sirens (every ten seconds, it seemed) and horns—the prospect of ever-present headaches came sorrowfully near.

The first six and a half months were fine. We were to assist in the directorship of the downtown mission program at Life Line, following the very able steps of Janice and Murlyn Enlow as they taught us "the ropes." Dealing with a society of "down and outs" and showing these men and women that Christ *must* be preeminent in their lives was a challenge. When the Enlows left in June 1979 responsibility fell directly on our shoulders. How often we called on Paul and Evelyn Hill for guidance. Not always did we agree, but seldom is there perfect, absolute harmony in a VS unit.

Life Line Mission stands as a testimony of the love of Christ and His people for a dying world. There are many stories of success. When Christ is given the way to work, victory can be claimed.

Ken from Washington had turned away from the Lord, stolen from his employer and escaped to San Francisco—only to find money running out and no place to run except to Christ and Christian institutions. (It became evident that we, regardless of our academic qualification, were totally helpless to deal with the complexities of sinful life without the divine guidance of our Lord.)

Tony from Louisiana, with a string



## "Thanks for flying United"

*by David Croxford*

of offences longer than his arm, came to the mission service one evening just to avoid buying a friend a meal. Tony fell under conviction, sought the Lord and was saved. He was running from the law but found he could not run from God. After seeking the Lord for help he turned himself over to the authorities. Now, because the Lord intervened in his life, Tony is a totally free man. Praise Jesus!

Louis from Tennessee shared one day during our studies in Romans how he thought Paul must have been from the south. "The folks in the south," he said, "they're the only folks I know that use 'I reckon' . . ." An alcoholic addicted to smoking, now freed by Jesus' blood.

Time passed quickly as we dealt with new situations. How the Lord was able to provide everything defies

The author and his wife, Margaret, with sons, Mark and Aaron, now serve as associate pastor of the Bertie, Ontario, church. Robert and Carol Spangler (Waynesboro, PA congregation) are directing the downtown ministry in San Francisco.

my understanding. (Funny, He doesn't consult us about how He should answer our prayers—He just responds to our faith.) Many mornings we prayed for meat or vegetables or something else. God's hand never failed. He knew our dependence was on Him and not on man or man's capabilities.

Contacts made through the mission were not only with persons from the world of the "down and outs." New Christians, old Christians, policemen, professional persons, visitors—all came to see the Lord's work.

The work was sometimes filled with problems. There didn't seem to be an easy way to deal with errors in society. Schedules became almost nonexistent because we could not determine the nature of tomorrow's events. The schedule we had was hectic, tiresome, and extremely fast. We learned that, like Jesus, we needed to demonstrate concern, compassion and conviction in every area of our lives.

"The Lord works in mysterious ways . . ." In November 1979 the United States Government Office of Immigration granted extension of our visas, but only for six months. Our service in San Francisco was terminated earlier than had been anticipated. We were glad to have served one year as director of the downtown mission. This work continues because individuals have responded to the call of Christ to service that requires faith which is more than words.

On April 28, 1980, a DC-10 left San Francisco International at 7:25 a.m. PDT for Chicago. Our term in Frisco had ended, but our education in Christ was just beginning.

As we left the ground and began our climb to the cruising altitude on our way home to Canada, our pilot said, "There is turbulent air this morning. Please keep your seatbelts fastened. We will endeavour to make this trip an enjoyable one for each of you. And thanks . . . for flying United!"

We are glad that in all our experiences, at Life Line Mission and where God has called us now, we can "fly united"—united in Christ . . . with Christ . . . for Christ.

*Evangelical Visitor*



## Pharr, Texas—Waiting For Hurricane Allen

Preparations had been made. Windows had been covered with plywood or masking tape. Food, bottled water and batteries had been purchased, and containers had been filled with water (including the bath tub). All that was left was to ask God for protection and to wait.

The storm was one of the largest on record with winds of 175 miles per hour, with the eye of the storm headed in a direct line to Brownsville. Winds were expected to diminish somewhat before the storm reached Pharr but could still be at a dangerous level. Tornadoes also often accompany a hurricane.

We had not lost telephone service and we contacted friends in the area of Roxbury, PA, which was then holding camp meeting. We asked that they pray and believe with us for our safety.

On Saturday evening, we were listening to reports on our transistor radio when we heard that the storm was stalling about 40 miles offshore in the Gulf and that something "strange" was happening. We went to bed that night with the confidence that God was answering prayer.

Rain fell steadily during the night with diminishing winds. Estimates were that winds in our area reached 70 miles per hour and

rain totals were 12-15 inches.

Those of us here at the Palm Valley congregation sustained some water damages and loss of trees but no injuries or anything serious.

Once again, we felt God's protection and love. There was a sense of confidence and calm in the midst of the storm to know that everything was in God's hand. The eye of the storm moved inland at a point of low population density.

Interesting comments have come from the community. Following is a quote from a local weatherman. "God stood at the mouth of the Rio Grande and held up His hands and told that hurricane 'You ain't going no further, you've hurt my people enough.'"

—Margaret Frymire

## Full Freedom of Religion Reported in Nicaragua

There is no reason to fear communism in Nicaragua, says Dr. Gustavo A. Parajon, a Managua public health officer and physician now on a speaking tour of churches on the West Coast.

Dr. Parajon, a Baptist, said his strife-wracked homeland has complete freedom of the press, "tremendous openness in the

government" and full freedom of religion. It also has Marxists as leaders, he acknowledged.

Dr. Parajon said 30 percent of Nicaragua's work force was unemployed January 1 and there is "some hunger." One reason for this, he explained, was that Anastasio Somoza "left us penniless" when he was ousted as dictator in July, 1979. "His repression, bombing, tanks, machine guns, destroyed many industries," Dr. Parajon said. As for communism, he said, "The situation and consciousness of Nicaragua are very different from those in Cuba in 1959. We know what we want. We do not want to copy another revolution."

Before President Somoza's ouster, he said, churches were not free, and members were jailed for reading Micah 3—the chapter that reads in part, "Rulers . . . ye who hate the good and love the evil . . . who eat the flesh of my people." The speaker said many churchmen, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, were officials in the new government and a fellow Baptist was currently ambassador to West Germany.

Churches in the United States, Canada and Europe sent 2,000 tons of food in the first seven months of the year, Dr. Parajon reported, and churches have also pledged to give \$2 million toward rehabilitation and rebuilding by the end of 1980.

## Surprises *from page 9*

young daughters. Perhaps this also is a joy to the refugees, as both men have young children of their own in Ethiopia.

Pat Oldham told about the loving relationship between Mamitu and her children. Faith Zercher says a big plus for any sponsoring family is that they learn so much about another culture, language, food and how other people look at things.

The host families are becoming increasingly aware of what it means to be black in North America, as they attempt to help their new friends find jobs. Wanda tells how she and Micias walked into a variety store to inquire about a job opening that was posted in the front window. When the lady behind the desk saw them approaching she immediately bristled and explained that the store was only seeking high school girls.

The sponsors have a new, very personal appreciation for the intense suffering fellow humans can endure. As they listen to their new friends they find themselves hurting with them. Sponsor Pat Oldham said she is learning to share the deep and lasting pain that comes when one is separated from one's family, perhaps forever, and what it means to

have no control over what happens to you or to your loved ones.

Yet, Pat notes, the Eritrean-Americans "participate whole-heartedly in our lives here, laughing and loving with us, while deep inside you know there is that terrible ache." The refugees have brought their sponsors unique gifts. Anne Chamberlain tells of the day their new friend received his first pay check. After cashing it he rushed off to the local farmers market and bought mounds of fresh fruit and vegetables for the family, spending nearly the entire check in this typical Eritrean way of saying thank you.

One of the first days Micias was in his new home, he gave Wanda Heise a handmade Ethiopian basket. Just before he left Sudan for Italy he had received the basket from his wife. She had woven it and smuggled it to him out of Ethiopia, sending the message that he was to give it to his eventual American sponsor.

Wanda treasures the basket. To her it symbolizes the way small moments of hope and human kindness create the larger kingdom story—proof that God is working in surprising, deeply moving ways that clash with the forces of violence and evil that produce refugees.

The Ethiopian basket, the fresh produce from the farmers market and the daily scenes of cross-cultural Christian

home life in six Harrisburg homes in Pennsylvania tell a story in common.

The story remains unfinished. New refugees continue to come to North America. MCC and other organizations, in cooperation with Church World Service, are reaching out to meet them, trying to provide sponsors for refugees coming out of Central America, Southeast Asia, South Africa and the Horn of Africa. Will we write new kingdom stories, as our brothers and sisters are doing in Harrisburg?

### REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

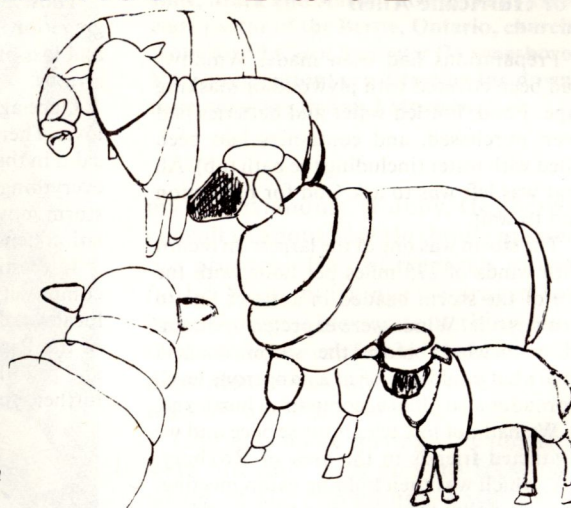
In response to General Conference action the Commission on Peace and Social Concerns has sent MCC Refugee Sponsorship Program information to all Brethren in Christ congregations in the United States. Included is a Sponsorship Commitment Form. For further information about sponsorship contact Mennonite Central Committee office, Akron, PA 17501; (717) 859-1151.



## Christian Education in New Mexico—Part 2

# Standing Together

by Warren Hoffman



The Navajo understand the danger to the sheep that grazes a distance from the flock. Mothers, children, and sheepdogs work vigilantly during the spring lambing season to keep the lambs and ewes with the rest of the flock where they will be safe from the coyotes.

The Brethren in Christ in New Mexico must be learning from the Navajo. For they have sensed the Spirit urging them to strengthen their Christian relationships so that they can stand strong, together, resisting the coyotes of discouragement, willfulness, irreconciliation, and accommodation with the world.

To appreciate this conviction, you almost have to be jostled and jolted in a sturdy vehicle along the dirt road to Chaco Canyon where a Navajo congregation lives and worships. There you might feel the "darkness of Chaco" (as some local persons describe it) in the pressures of traditional Navajo religion, of the Native American Church (the Peyote Cult), and of witchcraft. Or you could stand at the Navajo Mission and look out over the panorama of sagebrush stretching to the distant horizon. Seeing so few dwellings, you might feel the isolation of those who worship at the Navajo Chapel. Or you might sit with the members of the Sandia congregation in Albuquerque and listen as they tell of their struggle to fashion a vision that is faithful to their heritage and to the hurts of a metropolitan area of 350,000 people, so far from the population centers of the Brethren in Christ and so near to contrary ways of thinking. Then you might begin to understand the circumstances—really, not unlike those we all face—which have moved the Brethren in Christ in New Mexico to take steps to **strengthen their relationships to one another and to the larger family of the Brethren in Christ.**

**T**HE MAIN REASON for asking Winnie Swalm to travel across the continent was to serve as the primary resource person for a weekend conference of the Brethren in Christ in New Mexico. A rewarding number of persons registered for the conference, held at the Navajo Mission, May 9-11.

The conference began with a Friday evening service in the Navajo language. The songs and testimonies in the Friday evening service (except for Winnie's) were all in Navajo, as was the sermon by Woody Yazzie, a pastor and evangelist from a neighboring mission. The Navajos in attendance appreciated the content and length of Woody's message. (Everyone gathered in the Navajo Community Center building for refreshments and registration afterward, then found their assigned places in the homes and facilities of the mission for overnight accommodations.)

After breakfast on Saturday morning, conference participants dispersed to workshop sessions. Four workshops were offered in each of two morning sessions. At the request of the planning committee, Winnie presented a workshop entitled, "Communicating Values to Our Children," to suggest ways that parents in isolated settings (rural or urban) can draw upon the resources of home and church to communicate



Fannie Scott, longtime Navajo church leader, directs a workshop in the Navajo language.



**Right**  
**Bill and Lynda Eaton**  
 sing Navajo hymns in  
 the Saturday  
 evening rally.



**Far right**  
**Ken and Jill Crider,**  
 conference participants,  
 relax during a  
 snack break.



Biblical values to children. Marion Heisey led a workshop entitled, "Values in Conflict," in which he explored the dynamics of encountering different values within the Christian family and unacceptable values in our interactions with unbelievers. Jill Crider encouraged participants in her workshop to use "The Gift of Hospitality" to turn a home into a "mission point" to build the Kingdom of God. In her workshop, Connie Hoffman offered practical ways to translate concern for world hunger into an altered "More With Less" style of cooking and eating that is inexpensive, nutritious, and tasty. Two Navajo church leaders, Fannie Scott and Fred Yazzie, completed the selection of workshops with two for Navajo-speaking participants, "Raising Children by *Proverbs*" and "Marriage and the Family."

Immediately following lunch (a scrumptious meal of Navajo tacos) persons chose among special interest groups for medical professionals, Sunday School teachers, Navajo believers, and persons interested in a tour of the Navajo Mission. Responses were typified by one participant's comments on the meeting of medical professionals: "Important contemporary issues . . . very good discussion . . . Necessary!" After the special interest sessions, conference participants enjoyed playing volleyball and softball, hiking on Huerfano Mesa, or sightseeing at the Chaco National Monument. (The Chaco tour included a side trip to see the sanctuary and Christian Education facilities of the Chaco Canyon congregation. Ask Winnie about them.) The afternoon concluded with a picnic supper.

A Saturday evening Youth (of all ages) Rally featured the joyful and animated singing of scripture choruses in English and the special music of Billy and Lynda Eaton, a local Navajo couple, in Navajo. As speaker for the evening, Winnie Swalm gave testimony to the Lord's claim on her life through a variety of experiences from her childhood to the present.

The conference concluded on Sunday morning with a worship and communion service. The special music was superb, in accord with the local reputation of the Navajo Mission. The joy and warmth of the congregational singing was exhilarating. After a message by Warren Hoffman, Marion Heisey led the communion service. Participants stood in two lines through the center aisle of the chapel. Mable Eaton, a Navajo matriarch, and Jill Crider prayed the prayers of blessing.

As everyone sang and prayed, the bread and juice were

passed down the lines—from Navajo to Anglo, from old to young, from worshippers at Sandia to worshippers at Navajo Chapel, from familiar friends to new acquaintances, from those from near to those from afar.

The memory of this final scene is etched indelibly in the minds of participants as a glorious summation of the week and the conference. The Brethren in Christ in New Mexico, though separated by many miles from one another and by hundreds of miles from other Brethren in Christ, were standing together in fellowship, drawing upon one another's strength and wisdom, benefitting from the counsel and contributions of the larger brotherhood in the person of Winifred Swalm, and partaking together of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The warmth and significance of that communion with Jesus and with one another reminds us that there is strength and safety in standing together. Yes, our Navajo brothers and sisters have much to teach us in their way with sheep. The secret of strength and power in dangerous days is to be the people of God . . . standing together.

*Warren Hoffman, former principal of the Navajo school and pastor of the mission congregation, is now a church-planting pastor in Oklahoma City.*



**Annabelle Yazzie, Rosa Eyster and Ernestine Chavez**  
 prepare frybread for a conference meal.



# Readers Respond

To be considered for publication,  
letters must be signed  
and should be 300 words or less.

## To "Evangelicals and Feminism" by Paul and Jean Bubna, July 10, 1980 VISITOR.

We are evangelicals who felt misrepresented by the Bubnas' article on "Evangelicals and Feminism" in your July 10 issue. While we agree that the voice of secular feminism is strident and often ungodly, we believe the Bible's concern for justice along with righteousness means we must reexamine our interpretations of scripture when injustice is exposed. In the past, Christians following traditional interpretations of scripture were slow to oppose the divine right of kings and slavery when these ideas were "the spirit of the age."

In the case of the position of women, Paul does not overturn society's order of sex-roles, just as he did not specifically forbid slavery. Instead he subtly redefines these roles in a radical way by calling all Christians to mutual submission (Eph. 5:21) and defining husbands' love for their wives by stressing Christ's servanthood even to death. Christ elevated his disciples to the position of friends (John 15) and he freely took the servant role among them, washing their feet and cooking their breakfast (John 21). He often deliberately reversed the sex-roles of his day—teaching and commending Mary while reprimanding Martha, allowing women to accompany him, and making women the first witnesses of his resurrection when a woman's word was legally worthless. Therefore we cannot see the justification for the Bubnas' statement that "the whole tone of the New Testament is in diametric opposition to this (women's liberation) thinking of our times."

Through our study of scripture and our own experience, God has led us to the conviction that His ideal marriage relationship is the closest of friendships. As in any close friendship, the nature of the relationship will vary according to the needs of the people involved. An insistence that rigid sex roles and hierarchy are the only correct biblical interpretation is, in our understanding, both inaccurate and unfortunate. With the authors, we certainly agree that "The time has come for evangelicals to con-

sider seriously what the Word of God has to say about male-female relationships." We just hope they don't insist that we all come to the same conclusions!

Kathy and Rich Stuebing  
Lusaka, Zambia

The article by the Bubnas did not give an accurate image of "Evangelicals and Feminism." In describing feminism, the authors used remarks from some of the most radical feminist men and women. The quotations used were not representative of the majority of Christian feminists. Secular feminism was described. Suddenly the authors discussed evangelicalism. Nowhere did they explain the differences between secular and Christian feminist viewpoints. I personally believe there are many.

The authors of the article imply that discrimination is acceptable because of the Fall: "Have men tended to treat women unfairly? Of course. All human relationships have been affected by the Fall. God told Eve that one of the results of her moral catastrophe would be that man would dominate woman." To allow men to dominate women in the Christian Church, under the pretext of the Fall, only opens doors to suggest that men can also dominate anybody, say the Blacks, Jews, Cubans or others, because we live in a fallen world. This is a logical deduction from the statement made by Reverend and Mrs. Bubna. I cannot conceive of this as a Christian response to any human being.

I sincerely hope that you will print articles of the opposing viewpoint in the *Visitor*. I would be most pleased, in fact, if you would encourage articles of the opposing opinion to be submitted for publication. I see the *Visitor* as a place for the Brethren in Christ to express their opinions and ideas.

Sara Petrosky  
Grantham, PA

We who wish to see women in active roles of church leadership do not seek to adopt the secular stance of feminism as defined by various feminist quotes in "Evangelicals and Feminism." Destroying the home, abolishing love and denying biblical principles is not our intent as the article suggests. Rather, we would build a healthier body with stronger relationships between men and women, relationships that are not based on the passive dependence of women but built on the mutual strengths of both the male and female with each building up the other to exercise their God-given gifts.

When this happens—and it is happening—women will be freed to function in the roles to which they are called according to their gifts and interests. Some may indeed be called to plant churches, preach the word, and be spiritual leaders as were women in the New Testament.

In Christ's times, Jewish society believed that gender predetermined one's station in society. In that society, being female was a sentence to a life of domestic passivity and political nonexistence. One needn't be a serious student of New Testament culture to discover that Christ ignored the social norms that imposed on women an inferior status. If indeed he is our example, we too will encourage Christian women to exercise their abilities to their fullest capacity and thereby loose a tremendous force of compassion, creativity and intelligence for the furthering of Christ and his cause.

Glenace Frey  
Bloomfield, N.M.

I read with interest "Evangelicals and Feminism." I was glad to see a Brethren in Christ Church agency provide an opportunity for discussion of this vital issue. However, I am greatly concerned about the approach and content of the article. The following are several reasons: 1. Feminism as a modern social movement was improperly portrayed in the

*Evangelical Visitor*



article. The authors of the article did not grasp the total thought and/or practice of the movement. The authors sighted only extreme statements and without their context.

2. The authors seem to argue that feminism may hold assumptions that are non-Christian, hence they imply the total movement should be discredited. I would suggest that Christians have often accepted knowledge and practices from groups which hold non-Christian assumptions. For example, modern medical treatment is not rejected because the scientist doing the research did not believe in God. It would have been helpful for the authors to outline what ideas (if any) the Christian can accept from the larger society and the feminist movement in particular. Are the authors willing to reject scientific knowledge, economic practices, and political systems which do not accept Christian assumptions? Seemingly, the Christian should be critical of all knowledge and practice received from the larger society, but that does not necessarily mean total rejection.

3. The authors claim that evangelical feminists reject much of Scripture, but in the process of trying to show this the Bubnas seem to reject Galatians 3:28 and in particular its practical implications for faith and practice. Thus, it would have been helpful for the authors to outline what they believe to be the hermeneutical problems of the biblical feminists, and to have made clear their own principles for understanding Scripture. The issues involved in biblical interpretations on this issue are not as simple and sharp as the authors lead one to believe.

4. The question surrounding what is "natural" or "cultural" with regard to sexual identity or sex roles, etc., is made to appear beyond question. A study of the natural and social sciences will reveal that the cultural or environmental questions are frequently more complex and predominate than acknowledged.

I would recommend that the *Evangelical Visitor* continue the discussion of this issue with additional articles discussing the role and status of women and men from a Biblical perspective.

Emerson Leshner  
Pasadena, CA

## Editorial

### An open letter to a friend

Today I learned of the especially heavy load you are carrying right now in your ministry. I am writing to share with you my love, my support and my concern.

Hearing of the pressures you are facing this fall, I had to think of the Apostle Paul. I doubt if you identify with all the circumstances he recorded in 2 Corinthians 11—being shipwrecked, flogged and imprisoned, or being in danger from fellow countrymen and false brethren. I do know that you, like Paul, have "labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep." And I believe you share Paul's heartbeat when he said, "Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches."

I've heard you say you are serving the Lord with a clear sense of call. And it is evident that God has gifted you for leadership in the church, and has brought you to your present place of service.

We both know full well that the weight of responsibility and the rigors of decision-making are part and parcel of Christian leadership. One cannot escape the possibilities of being misunderstood, or not being able to meet all of the expectations of those whom we serve. The life of Paul exemplifies all of these perils facing persons in leadership positions.

But is it not true that the Lord intends that the Gospel be "good news" to us, as well as to those whom we serve? And does not the Bible point to a genuine sharing of our burdens and concerns—first with Christ, the Lord of the Church, and secondly with our sisters and brothers in the faith?

You have been called by the church to minister to many. Who ministers to you? You have been asked to provide vision, insight, counsel, budget-balancing, administrative skills. With whom do you share these burdens?

I've been praying for you and those close to you, that together you may sense God's inescapable nearness and enabling strength. Furthermore, I am praying for myself, that God will help me be more sensitive to your needs and more creative in my support. It's not fair that you should have to ask for support; we believers around you ought to be perceptive enough to see those needs and respond on our own initiative. And yet, you need to "open the door" a little wider. You can be a very private person at times, and almost unapproachable on this deeper level, at least by me.

I value deeply the support I've sensed from you in past years. And I'm trying to master the fine art of being a truly supportive friend, in deed as well as in word. I can only hope this letter and my concern helps to make your load just a little lighter in the coming weeks.

In Christian love,





THE ARCHIVES  
MESSIAH COLLEGE  
GRANTHAM, PA 17027

# Everyone needs a good-night kiss

A. Ruth Lehman



Tucking our children into bed over the past nineteen years has been a pleasant ritual. After family devotions and teethbrushing, I have gone from bed to bed or room to room to kiss a cheek or forehead.

But it has been more than just a time to kiss. Sometimes I have been greeted by tears as I stooped over the bed. An apology, or a compliment, or a distress might be shared in this cozy ending-of-the-day-moment. Little arms have pulled me close. "I'm glad you're my mommie," has been whispered or a teasing, "I'm not going to let you go," as the grip around my neck tightened.

Enveloped in a warm cloak of love, "Do you want a good-night kiss, too?" I'd tease my husband.

Two of our four children are college students now. When they are home, our good-night visit is a joy to each of us. When our college daughter babysat the two younger children, she confided the next morning, "I kissed them good-night. I thought it was the thing to do."

Last November, a seventy-eight year old lady came to live with us for a little while. She was losing her eyesight and needed to stay with someone until she could go to her daughter's home in Texas. We met her just two weeks before she came to our home. I was eager to make her stay with us a happy one.

The first night, I went into her room to check on her. She had placed her cane within reach and crawled into bed. She looked so vulnerable and a bit frightened lying in that strange bed. I pulled the covers a little more tightly around her shoulder and wished her good-night. How could I make her feel secure and at home? Impulsively, I leaned over and kissed her wrinkled forehead. She groped for my hand and squeezed it. The smile on her lips plainly declared, "Everyone needs a good-night kiss!"

*Mrs. Lehman lives near York, PA*

**In coming  
issues. . . .**

"Believer Burnout: The Spiritual Exhaustion Syndrome," by Edward Kuhlman and Howard Landis (a two-part article).

"A Church-wide Deacon's Visit," by Robert Ives.

"More Than Medicine to the Land of Enchantment," by Sandra Neyer.